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BOOKS ON JEWISH EDUCATION

The New Education in Religion. By HENRY BERKOWITZ, D.D.
Parts I and II. Philadelphia: THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA
SOCIETY. Pt. I, pp. 128; Pt. II, pp. 108.

IN this book of two small volumes Dr. Berkowitz endeavours, as its title indicates, to apply the principles of the new education to the religious instruction of the Jewish youth. What mainly distinguishes the new education in general from the old is its definition of the function of education in psychological terms as the development of the powers and faculties of the pupil rather than in cultural terms as the perpetuation of certain ideals and standards and the transmission from generation to generation of the highest products of the world's civilization. There can be no denying the value of this psychological point of view. Every generation has its own problems which differ from those of previous generations, and, consequently, each in turn must be given the physical and mental powers to cope with its problems independently. Moreover the mind, even in childhood, is not a *tabula rasa* and cannot be made to acquire even the knowledge of the past, not to mention the capacity to meet the demands of the future save in accordance with the laws of its own nature. Dr. Berkowitz renders a valuable service therefore to Jewish education by calling attention to this psychological point of view and to the advantages which must accrue as a result of its application to the religious education of the Jew, for it is a fact that but few of our religious schools pay due regard to the physical and psychical needs of our children.

But the aim of the book is not merely to point out the principle but to apply it in the concrete to the problems of curriculum, method of instruction, school organization and management, discipline, &c., so that it may be a practical guide

to parents, teachers, and principals of schools. In this, however, it falls somewhat short of accomplishment because of a defect not peculiar to it, but characteristic rather of the new education in general.

For the value of the psychological definition of the aim of education has led many educators to forget that the older conception of the aim in terms of a traditional culture to be perpetuated has also its value, which must not be lost sight of. Education has a social as well as an individual significance, and as long as the adult generation has to do the world's work and has to do it in accordance with a vision that requires planning for generations yet unborn, so long must it remain the concern of society not merely that the rising generation shall have the power to continue the work but that it shall inherit the plan of work—the ideal. Not merely the development of the potential powers of the child is the goal of education, but their employment in the discharge of the specific obligations and in the service of the specific ideals which the old generation, in order to be true to itself, must bequeath to the new. It follows, therefore, that though the psychological definition of the aim of education is useful in determining educational method, it cannot give us the content of education, which must be determined by the ideals of the adult world. And, if this is true of education in general, it is particularly true of Jewish education. For the Jew in the diaspora, constituting a minority of the population, and living in a non-Jewish environment, has to perpetuate his ideals and institutions in competition with those of the dominant faith, although the latter may perhaps be utilized with equal success as the former in the development of the child's spiritual powers and capacities, or, to use a favourite word of our author's, in the development of 'character'.

Dr. Berkowitz defines the aim of the new education in religion as 'the development of character based on a deep love of the ideals and principles of our religion'. We should be more inclined to define it as the training of the child's character in the service of the ideals and principles of our religion. This may

seem a distinction without a difference, but the following elaboration of his definition shows that the distinction is real. 'The Jewish school', he says, 'is distinct from the schools of other religions in urging these Jewish methods of awakening and deepening the religious life'. From the point of view of the author, the child has a certain natural religiosity, the development of which is the aim of religious education, and the difference between the Jewish school and the Christian is merely one of method, the Jewish method preferring the use of Jewish lesson material. He, therefore, holds that the specific content of Judaism affects the method only, but that the aim is determined by the psychology of the child. Would not the reverse of this, however, appear more reasonable, to let the specific content of Judaism determine the aim of instruction and to let the psychological needs of the child determine the method only?

To illustrate our point by a concrete instance. What place should instruction in Hebrew hold in the curriculum of the Jewish school? Dr. Berkowitz, speaking from the psychological point of view, observes that 'the fact that Hebrew is the language of Jewish worship associates with this language a devout sentiment of incalculable value in fostering a prayerful spirit of reverence' and that 'this deep psychologic value cannot be surrendered without irreparable loss'. He therefore comes to the conclusion that 'so much of Hebrew as is used in the congregational worship' must be taught in every school. Only incidentally does he mention the importance of Hebrew as the key to an understanding of the sources of Judaism and as a bond of union between Jews. Consequently but little emphasis is laid on thorough training in the Hebrew language. Until after confirmation, which, in the opinion of our author, should be about the fifteenth year of a child's life, he is content that 'the study of the sacred tongue' be 'limited to preparation for its use in prayer'. But the great mass of conservative Jews, who regard an adequate knowledge of the Torah in its own language as indispensable to the maintenance of Jewish tradition, and above all the nationalists, who are vitally concerned with keeping alive the national aspirations

of the Jewish people and preserving and adding to its cultural possessions, would not and could not assign so limited a scope to Hebrew instruction even though there be no inherent quality in the child's soul which demands more thorough instruction in Hebrew in order to bring it to maturity.

Dr. Berkowitz is to be commended for his tactful avoidance of all controversial discussion. He desires his book to be of service to schools of Orthodox and Reform tendencies alike, and does not impose on his readers the liberal interpretation of Judaism with which he is known to be identified. At the same time, his book cannot be of much practical use to Orthodox or Conservative Jewish educators because of the sins of omission which, as we have already shown, follow naturally from the author's conception of the aim of Jewish education.

Methods of Teaching Primary Grades. By ELLA JACOBS. Course A and Course B. Correspondence School for Religious School Teachers conducted by THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY. Philadelphia, Pa. [1914.] A, pp. 192 ; B, pp. 214.

These two volumes apply to the concrete problem of the religious education of early childhood the principles of the new education outlined by Dr. Berkowitz. They show very strikingly the educational advantages which a proper regard for the psychology of childhood affords. Their chief virtue is their insistence in every lesson on some point of contact with the child's daily life. This has the effect of making the child feel the importance of his religious education not merely as necessary to the attainment of some remote goal but in the daily conduct of his life. It tends to make his religion an intimate personal experience, not merely an abstract concept. Typical of some of the suggestions in the book is that which recommends the practice of celebrating the birthdays of the pupils by a religious ceremonial in the class-room, and suggests that this be made the occasion of a gift to charity by the pupil in order that his birthday

and all joyous occasions be associated in his mind with giving and not merely with selfishly receiving gifts.

In her treatment of the Bible stories, Miss Jacobs utilizes them almost exclusively to illustrate moral principles, and she therefore has no scruples about introducing legendary elaborations into the biblical narrative if they can be used to point a moral. Thus she connects the mess of lentils for which Esau sells his birthright to Jacob with the mourning meal on the occasion of Abraham's death in accordance with an ancient *Haggadah*, though no such significance is attached to it in the Bible itself. There is danger in such a course in that it tends to destroy the unique position of the Bible as the standard of religious authority for the Jew. This danger inheres in the whole method of teaching the Bible merely as the source-book for edifying stories without any necessary connexion and omitting whatever is not immediately and without difficulty applicable by the child in his daily life. The result of this eclectic way of dealing with biblical history is to make the book of much more value to schools of liberal tendency, which encourage a measure of eclecticism in religion, than to those of more conservative tendency.

Also in discussing methods of teaching religious observances Miss Jacobs seems to have in mind primarily homes where prayers are said mainly in English, if at all, and where there are no scruples about introducing variations from the ancient Hebrew text and traditional ritual. For such, however, as she has in mind, her suggestions are of great service and can help parent and teacher in the cultivation of a spirit of piety and reverence.

Methods of Teaching Biblical History (Junior Grade). By EDWARD N. CALISCH, Ph.D. Correspondence School for Religious School Teachers conducted by THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY. Philadelphia, Pa. [1914.] pp. 247.

Dr. Calisch attempts in this book to assist the teacher of biblical history in the Junior Grades as Miss Jacobs does those

in the Primary Grades, but not with equal success. He seems to be beset by the fear of teaching the child doctrine which he may be constrained to reject or revise in later life, and thus in the face of a difficult passage seems inclined to seek refuge in assigning an allegorical or symbolic meaning to it. He states in his introduction that 'the aim of instruction in biblical history is to acquaint the pupil with the history of the Jewish people as portrayed in the Bible and to teach in connexion with it the lessons of that faith which is basic to moral duty and which inspires its followers with pure ideals and high motives of conduct'. But does this not limit too much the aim of such instruction? Why use it merely to teach 'the faith that is basic to moral conduct' and not the rest of Jewish doctrine as well, the specific heritage and distinction of Israel, expressing Israel's unique outlook upon life and concerned not only with our duties as men, but with the special duties which the Jew feels to devolve upon him as Jew, as one of that people whose history Dr. Calisch would help us teach? For the ethical value of teaching a people's history to those who are themselves of that people lies not primarily in the moral judgements which the teacher helps his pupil to derive from the events of history, but in the sense of identification with the high purposes of his people, of pride in its heroes, of love for its institutions and of faith in the rôle it is still to play in history. By begging the question of the historicity of the biblical narrative and treating it merely from the point of view of a story with which it is possible to connect a moral, this advantage is lost, the events of the story appear remote and unreal, the connexion between the Israel of history and the Israel of to-day is obscured, and a thrilling tale is sublimated into an abstract moral with little appeal to the active imagination of childhood.

To be sure, Dr. Calisch in his introduction warns the teacher against making the moral 'too obvious', but he himself repeatedly disregards his own advice in this respect. Thus in his chapter on 'The Birth and Youth of Moses', he has more than two pages of pure moralizing on such themes as are indi-

cated by the following marginal headings to his paragraphs: 'Evil causes evil', 'But also good begets good', 'The appeal of the helpless', 'Kindness to dumb animals'. Again, not content to let the story of how the pillar of cloud and flame guided the wanderings of the Israelites convey to the children its obvious moral of faith in the divine guidance of Israel, he feels called upon to give the child a homiletic elaboration of it in a paragraph telling of how a pilot guides his ship by the compass, and concluding with the words, 'So God has given a compass to us. It is His Holy Law; the teachings which have come to us through the Bible and the inspired teachers of all ages. This Torah, this word of God is our compass. We need only to follow its direction and we will go right and need have no fear. It is God's pillar of cloud by day and His pillar of fire by night for us as well—and for every generation'. These instances, chosen at random, will suffice to show how the author's homiletic trend of mind leads him constantly to disregard his own warning with reference to the didactic treatment of the story.

Like Miss Jacobs, Dr. Calisch lays great stress on the 'point of contact' in teaching and religiously suggests one for each lesson in his book, but an examination of these points of contact will show that our author has a misconception of what is meant by the point of contact in teaching and of the pedagogic function it is to perform. The necessity of a point of contact arises from the psychological principle of apperception. This principle takes cognizance of the fact that the mind, when confronted with a new experience, invariably attempts to relate it to some past experience, and that the ultimate meaning to it of this new experience will be dependent as much upon the mind's previous content as upon its present perceptions. It is said that when the American Indians first saw the ships of the 'Pale-face' on the sea they took them for a new variety of ocean fowl. A white man seeing this sight, though he had never seen those same ships before, would at once have recognized them for what they were, not because his senses would operate differently from those of the Indian, but because his previous mental content would have been

different. If we wish to apply this principle to teaching, it is obvious that we cannot depend on the mere presentation of the lesson to the child in order to convey to him the meaning which the lesson has for us, but we must previously assemble those elements in his knowledge and experience in the light of which he would interpret the new information presented to him as we would have him interpret it. These elements constitute what is known technically as the point of contact. Our author, however, introduces new matter that is both extraneous to the story and no part of the child's previous knowledge, and calls it 'point of contact', because he finds in it some slight analogy to the ideas of the lesson. I shall give but one instance of this, which, however, is typical. The following is suggested as the point of contact for the story of Moses' appearance before Pharaoh.

'Let the teacher tell some story like the following, but let him take care not to have the incidental story overshadow the biblical event. Children, have you ever heard the story of Robert of Sicily? He was a very rich and proud king, &c., &c.'

One is inclined to ask the author: 'If the story of Moses and Pharaoh needs a point of contact in order to tell it effectively, does not the story of Robert of Sicily itself need one as well? And, if the story of Robert of Sicily itself needs a point of contact, how can it serve as the point of contact for the story of Moses and Pharaoh?'

In general this book is more creditable to the author's homiletic skill in the presentation of the biblical narrative than to his pedagogic ability.

Methods of Teaching Jewish History (Senior Grade). By EDWARD N. CALISCH, Ph.D. Correspondence School for Religious School Teachers conducted by THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY, Philadelphia, Pa. [1915.] pp. 264.

Dr. Calisch is much more successful in this book than in the previous one. His ethical discussions are more in place in dealing with children of senior grade (i.e. between the ages of

thirteen and fifteen) than in dealing with younger children. Moreover, the biblical narrative of the period covered in this book, viz. from the conquest of Canaan to the division of the kingdom, contains less of the miraculous for Dr. Calisch's scrupulous liberalism to explain by far-fetched allegorical interpretations. Our author's interpretation of the significance of historic periods is very suggestive to the teacher and makes the book of value in the religious school.

Methods of Teaching Jewish Ethics. By JULIA RICHMAN and EUGENE H. LEHMAN, M.A. Correspondence School for Religious School Teachers conducted by THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY. Philadelphia, Pa. [1914.] pp. 274.

This book aims to give a course of instruction in ethics adapted to the needs of the Jewish religious school. The book was originally planned by Miss Richman, who is the author of the first ten chapters. The remaining six were written after her death by Mr. Lehman, who completed the work in accordance with her general plan. The subject-matter is classified under five categories of duties: (1) home duties, (2) school duties, (3) communal duties, (4) civic duties, (5) religious duties. These are each subdivided with a view to the ages of the children, so that in each year of the course, which covers a period of three years and is designed for children between the ages of eleven and fourteen, the children learn some of the duties under each of these categories. Thus, under the category of home duties, the child is taught, in the first year, duties to parents, in the second, duties to brothers, sisters, and relatives, and in the third duties to servants; under that of school duties he is taught, in the first year, duties to teacher; in the second, duties to classmates; in the third, duties to 'our school', &c.

The first chapter of the book is introductory and contains Miss Richman's exposition of the guiding principles embodied in the book and a general discussion as to the nature of Jewish

ethics. In this she closely adheres to the views of Lazarus, from whom she quotes the following :

‘An investigation of the essence and basis of the moral law reveals that Judaism everywhere clearly advances the thought that not because God has ordained it is a law moral but because it is moral therefore has God ordained it. Not by divine command does the moral become law, but because its content is moral and it would necessarily, even without an ordinance, become law, therefore is it enjoined by God.’

This conception of the autonomy of the moral law in Judaism enables our author, in a measure, to beg the question of religious ethical training. If the moral becomes law ‘not by divine command’ but ‘because its content is moral’ then, obviously, that content can be taught quite independently, and Jewish ethics can free itself altogether from any connexion with Jewish theology, with the result that no different method need be employed in teaching ethics in a Jewish school than in a secular school. Miss Richman’s book does not go to the logical extreme suggested here. She has as one of the categories of duties, but only as one on a parity with others, duties to our religion. Moreover, the illustrative material which she uses to impress her lessons on the child draws very largely and judiciously on biblical and rabbinic sources. But the reader cannot escape the impression that the authors of this book did not utilize to the full the opportunity of bringing the religious sentiments and convictions of the Jew to bear on the training of the child in moral conduct. The love and fear of God, the dread of sin as alienating us from Him, the passion for holiness that unites us with Him, the deep reverence for God’s handiwork in nature that banishes levity and obscenity from association with man’s physical functions, the steadfast faith in divine support and the sense of communion with God, which give moral courage and confidence, the inspiration for action which comes from hope for the fulfilment of prophetic visions as yet unrealized—all these are, if not entirely ignored, at least not made to render all the moral value they possess.

But despite this important omission, the book is a useful one.

Particularly those chapters written by Miss Richman herself show an acquaintance with pedagogic method derived not alone from books but also from class-room experience. Her illustrations are apt, her points of contact are real points of contact, and she shows familiarity with the range of a child's interests and facility in bringing the lesson down to the level of the child's comprehension.

The last six chapters, written by Mr. Lehman, do not show this appreciation of the child's psychology to the same extent, and the teacher who would be guided closely by them would find himself frequently speaking over the heads of his pupils. Their author seems to show, however, a somewhat better appreciation of the value of the religious emotions to the moral training, though this may only be due to the circumstance that it was left to him to write the chapter on 'Our Duties to Judaism'.

The strong point of the book is the assistance it gives in developing the moral judgement of the pupils, its weakness is its failure to reach the hidden springs of moral action that lie in the religious sentiment. But to expect a course in ethics to accomplish this is perhaps expecting the impossible. It is at least an open question whether Jewish ethics can be taught to advantage as a separate subject apart from Jewish religious doctrine and Jewish law.

Methods of Teaching the Jewish Religion in Junior and Senior Grades. By JULIUS H. GREENSTONE, Ph.D. Correspondence School for Religious School Teachers conducted by THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY. Philadelphia, Pa. [1915.] pp. 349.

In this volume Dr. Greenstone gives not so much a method of teaching the Jewish religion as an exposition of its beliefs and practices for the benefit of religious school teachers. The suggestions with regard to method are introduced, as it were, casually in connexion with the analysis of the subject matter. Thus, though the book is intended both for the teachers of junior

and senior grades, the author does not either divide the subject-matter between these grades or suggest any differences of method for them in accordance with the difference in the respective ages of the children that they represent. Such pedagogic suggestions as the book does contain are, however, of value. Thus Dr. Greenstone is right in advising that instruction in the forms and ceremonies of religion precede any attempt to teach its dogmas and general beliefs, because the natural process of education is one that goes from the concrete to the abstract, from the specific to the general. His recommendation of the more extensive use of concrete objects in teaching the ceremonies and symbols of Judaism is also one that should receive the attention of teachers.

But it is not the value of its pedagogic suggestions that constitutes the merit of this book. From the pedagogic point of view a more detailed treatment of the method of teaching the Jewish religion is still a desideratum. The book has nevertheless a distinct value for Jewish education. For, after all, the success of the teacher of religion is much more dependent on his personal attitude to the subject he is teaching than on class-room devices and methods. Dr. Greenstone's book serves admirably to create that reverent and appreciative attitude toward everything that has had a part in the religious life of Israel which should characterize the teacher's relation to his subject. His exposition of Jewish belief and observance is simple, straightforward, sympathetic and free from polemics, argument or apologetics. One cannot read the book without feeling deeply the sanity and helpfulness of Jewish doctrine and the beauty and poetry of Jewish observance. Many a teacher reading this book will realize, perhaps for the first time, what a consistent and harmonious scheme for the sanctification of human life the Jewish religion affords, and some who may hitherto have been rather inclined to regard the greater part of Jewish observance as a lifeless formalism, destined soon to become obsolete, may well be influenced by a book such as this radically to change their point of view to one more in accord with their position as teachers of Judaism.

Methods of Teaching—Pedagogy applied to Religious Instruction.

By DAVID E. WEGLEIN, A.M. THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY. Philadelphia, Pa. [1915.] pp. 114.

Mr. Weglein, in this book, discusses for the benefit of religious school teachers those elementary pedagogic principles which are fundamental to all teaching and which, he rightly maintains, are as applicable to the teaching of religion as to any other branch of instruction. The foundation of all good teaching, Mr. Weglein tells us, rests on (1) knowledge of the subject-matter, (2) knowledge of the child mind, and (3) correct methods. The book presumes the teacher to be in possession of the first of these three prerequisites to good teaching and proceeds to discuss the remaining two. Under the head of knowledge of the child's mind, the author discusses in five chapters attention, sensation and perception, memory and imagination, conception, judgement and reason, the emotions and the will. In connexion with each psychological principle discussed, its application to the art of teaching is given with illustrations drawn mostly from the religious school curriculum. Under the head of method there are three chapters devoted to the method of the recitation, the purpose of the recitation, and the art of questioning.

Mr. Weglein's exposition is concise, clear, and, in the main, convincing. Some educators may, however, be inclined to take issue with him on one or two points. Not all, for example, would agree with him in his condemnation of prizes and other artificial incentives on the one hand and, on the other, of the '“discipline of consequences” or punishment as a material consequence of an act', to which he objects on the ground of the 'lack of moral obligation involved'. Inasmuch as children cannot be expected to know the value of the knowledge about to be imparted to them until they are already in possession of that knowledge, and, negatively, inasmuch as they cannot appreciate the evil of conduct that interferes with the acquisition of such knowledge by themselves or the class, may not artificial incentives and appropriate punishments legitimately be employed to ensure

such correct habits of diligent attention and persevering effort as will secure them this knowledge? The appreciation of motive is a later development which will come as the very result of their earlier diligence whatever their motive for such diligence may have been at the time. There is still truth in the talmudic dictum *מחוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה*. 'The performance of a precept, even though with some ulterior end in view, leads to its performance for its own sake'.

Mr. Weglein's book, however, serves its purpose admirably. It is particularly serviceable for principals of religious schools who desire some book on pedagogy as a basis for training the teachers under them to render more efficient service.

Jewish Education: Historical Survey. By WILLIAM ROSENAU, Ph.D., and ABRAM SIMON, Ph.D. Philadelphia, Pa. THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY. 1912. pp. 102.

This little volume contains a brief sketch of the contribution of the Jewish people to education. This is a theme usually ignored by writers on the history of education, not because this contribution has been insignificant, but, as Dr. Rosenau points out, because the rabbinic literature, which contains the sources for a large and important period in the development of Jewish education, was inaccessible to most writers on the subject. The book is divided into three parts, of which the first and third, dealing respectively with the biblical and the modern era, were written by Dr. Simon, and the second, which treats of the rabbinic period, was written by Dr. Rosenau.

Dr. Simon, in the first part, discusses (1) the general trend of education, (2) the specific purpose of education in the Bible, (3) the standard of general culture in the biblical era, (4) how or by whom such education was imparted, (5) the methods and principles of such education applicable to-day in our religious schools, and (6) the message which the biblical educational ideal

holds for this age. He sums up the ideal of biblical education in the term 'religious culture'. What he means by this religious culture will be suggested by the following quotation from his book :

“‘Know God in order to live godly’”, this is the purpose of education in the Bible. Know God, not for the intellectual satisfaction involved, but in order to love Him ! Love Him, not for the mere discharge of emotional energy, but that you may live ! Live, not for a mere satisfaction of the instinct for existence, but in order that you may consecrate it ! In other words, religious culture is the educational ideal of the Bible.’

This culture, Dr. Simon tells us, was primarily fostered during the biblical period in the home and by the parents, the home laying especial emphasis on the ideal of obedience. It was advanced also by the priests, who cultivated the religious sentiment through their appeal to tradition, ceremony, and symbol ; by the prophets, who laid stress on the conscience and the ethical aspect of religion ; by the scribes, who appreciated the educational value of religious literature and thus gave the world its greatest text-book—the Bible ; and by the *hakamim*, who appealed directly to the intelligence and philosophic reason in enforcing the religious ideal.

The consideration of these aspects of the educational ideal of the Bible suggests to Dr. Simon five important principles applicable in religious education to-day. They are :

(1) ‘Religious culture is primarily home-made and home-grown.’

(2) ‘In the home and in the religious school we need the emphasis upon faith and loyalty . . . but the real purpose of faith and loyalty is for the strengthening of tradition . . . a traditionless home is anaemic.’

(3) ‘An excessive harping on this string may produce an ethical discord . . . Thus home and religious school should be especially concerned that religious culture should work conscience into the life of faith.’

(4) ‘Oral instruction is not sufficient . . . When the Torah came, education by text-book was Jewishly justified. They [the

home and school] can have no better means for the cultivation of the religious spirit than a ceaseless love for the Bible.'

(5) 'Our religious culture need not fear . . . the warm breath of other cultures.'

Dr. Simon also gives us suggestions of method derived from the methods of biblical education, but as they contain none that are not generally recognized, they need not be mentioned here.

In the discussion of the rabbinic period, Dr. Rosenau does not attempt, as does Dr. Simon in treating the biblical period, to formulate the ideal and the underlying principles of the educational system of the rabbis or its message to educators of the present day, but contents himself with showing us the esteem in which education was held by the Jews during this period, the abundance of the schools in which it was fostered, the general character of the curriculum, methods and discipline of the schools, the status of the religious teacher and what were considered the necessary qualifications for teaching. The many quotations from rabbinic literature which he uses to illustrate the thought of the rabbis on these subjects support the contention that 'the Jew had manifested marked pedagogical genius and skill in the course of his career'. It is to be regretted, however, that Dr. Rosenau did not try to summarize the message of the rabbinic period of Jewish education as Dr. Simon did that of the biblical period, though the nature of the sources made such a task extremely difficult. Dr. Rosenau fails to show what was unique or distinctive in Jewish education during this period except that he calls attention to the question and answer method employed in the schools and its effect in the development of the reasoning power. One would assume *a priori* that a people with a history as unique as that of the Jews must have developed a correspondingly unique system of education. Perhaps Dr. Rosenau's failure to point out the distinctive characteristics of rabbinic education was due to his limiting his subject too closely to the formal education of the schools and ignoring all other educational factors, such as the synagogue, the home, &c.—a limitation which he probably felt that the scope of the work demanded of him.

In the third part of the book Dr. Simon traces briefly the history of Jewish educational endeavour as influenced by Mendelssohn and the emancipation, 'Jewish science', the Reform movement and the Orthodox reaction, the Russian *Haskalah*, and the renaissance of Hebrew under the influence of nationalistic ideas, concluding with a description of the present status of Jewish education. He is very optimistic with regard to the progress made during this period and, more especially, with regard to the present outlook in the United States, where, he claims, 'religious education has made the speediest and most enduring progress'. But is this roseate view justified by the facts? Tested by the criterion of what, according to Dr. Simon himself, constitutes the aim of Jewish education, namely, religious culture and the sanctification of life, the efficiency of our modern Jewish education may well be called into question. His fallacy is doubtless due to his identifying too much the cause of education with improvement of pedagogic method in the schools. He apparently does not reflect that these improvements were necessitated by the fact that the constant encroachments of the non-Jewish environment upon the social life of the Jewish people weakened the educational influence of the home, the synagogue and the traditional literature of the Jew on Jewish life. That the necessary adjustments to this situation are being sought is indeed encouraging, but we have not yet reached a stage where we can congratulate ourselves on our 'rapid and enduring progress'.

The Scripture Stories Retold for Young Israel. Vol. I. By Dr. MENDEL SILBER. St. Louis: THE MODERN VIEW PUBLISHING CO. [1914.] pp. 80.

In this book the author endeavours to retell for children the biblical narrative from Creation to the giving of the Law 'in somewhat modified form and in the modern spirit'. In an introduction treating of 'Religious Education—Past and Present', he deplores, on the one hand, the attempt to treat the various episodes of the biblical narrative as separate stories, ignoring the

‘connected causation’ and, on the other hand, the method of teaching them ‘in their entirety and original arrangement without the least consideration as to the child’s capacity or comprehension’.

What the author means by teaching in the modern spirit seems primarily to be to teach the child in such a method that the religious point of view taught him will need a minimum of revision when the child attains to a more scientific knowledge of the world. To give a characteristic instance—he would have us teach the story of Creation with the order of creation given in the Bible, but would omit the reference to six days, declaring that, if the six days of creation be mentioned ‘the child’s faith will be undermined, if not altogether destroyed, when he gets to know anything about the world from the standpoint of evolution’.

That the conflict between the teachings of the Bible and of modern science on many points does constitute a serious problem in the religious education of the adolescent there can be no doubt, but one may very well question whether Dr. Silber’s method adds in the slightest degree to its solution. For, to take his treatment of the story of Creation as typical, the child who has been taught this story in the way he suggests will, to be sure, have no difficulty in adjusting what he has subsequently been taught of evolution with what he had previously learned in his religious school about creation. But, it is to be presumed, our pupil will some day, probably during adolescence, acquire a first-hand knowledge of the Bible, a privilege which Dr. Silber would surely not wish to deny him. At once the discrepancies between the Bible itself and both the science and the biblical history that have been taught him become apparent, and he will either be hard put to it to reconcile them or, what is even more likely, will dismiss the Bible from his thought as a book of ancient mythology beneath the serious consideration of our sophisticated modern age. The very care that was taken to exclude from biblical instruction all those parts which conflict with the scientific theories of the day will be construed by him to mean that his teachers felt those parts to be valueless and were not wholly

sincere in the reverence in which they professed to hold the Bible.

Dr. Silber does not then succeed by his attempted rationalizations in saving the pupil from the inevitable *Sturm und Drang* period of religious adolescence, but he does thereby succeed only too well in spoiling many a good story and robbing it of its charm and fascination for the naïve fancy of childhood. For the Bible stories were originally intended for a naïve people, and one cannot rationalize them without doing violence to them. Again and again our author is led into inconsistencies and absurdities by his attempts at rationalizing. A few examples will suffice. Thus, in his desire to avoid telling of the miraculous way in which, according to the Bible, the people of Sodom, bent on entering Lot's house, were afflicted with a sudden blindness so that they could not find the door, he says that when Lot, after having refused to give up the strangers, returned to his house, 'the people were so angry that they could not find the door which they meant to break'. Would the author have us really believe that a man can be literally blinded by anger so as not to see an object of the size of a door when his attention is fixed on it, because he is determined to break it down? Again, in telling the story of Hagar and Ishmael, he recounts how Hagar, after their supply of water is exhausted, is ready to give up in despair, when a stranger, passing by, shows her where an oasis is to be found near at hand. No mention is made of Hagar's prayer, nor is the sudden appearance of the 'stranger' (he is not an angel in Dr. Silber's version) ascribed to any divine providence. Obviously, the whole point of the story, which is the nearness of God 'to all that call upon Him' is lost, and all that the author tells the pupil is a matter-of-fact incident in no wise worthy of being recorded in the Bible. Finally, to cite but one more instance, in telling the story of Joseph's interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker, he feels compelled by his modern view to tell the children, 'You see in those days, and especially in Egypt, people made much of dreams. Nowadays we do not bother much with dreams. We know that they don't mean anything'. He then proceeds with

the story as told in the Bible. But that story has as a premiss, without which the whole plot is incomprehensible, the idea that dreams have, or at least may have, a meaning. If Dr. Silber thinks that a dangerous belief for the child, he ought to omit the story altogether: he ought not to teach it and introduce it by a statement that destroys the essential premiss which gives significance to the incidents recorded. If dreams may have a meaning, Joseph is a seer, if not, he is a charlatan. The above are but a few of the many contradictions and absurdities into which Dr. Silber's tendency to rationalism leads him. It is the more to be regretted that this fundamental defect mars the book, as it would otherwise be not without merit, the language being much simpler and more comprehensible to children than in most biblical histories.

The Jewish Teacher, an Aid in Teaching the Bible, especially the Junior Bible for Jewish School and Home. By EUGENE H. LEHMAN, M.A. Series I, Early Heroes and Heroines; Series II, Early Kings and Prophets. New York: BLOCH PUBLISHING CO. [1914-1915.] Series I, pp. 170; Series II, pp. 239.

These books are designed to assist the religious school teacher in teaching biblical history on the basis of the Junior Bible, a translation into simple English of most of the interesting narratives of the Bible. The first chapter, which is introductory, discusses the aim and method of Jewish education, offers various suggestions to teachers as to how they are to plan their work, and concludes with a general bibliography on Judaism, the Bible, and principles of teaching. All subsequent chapters contain an assignment of readings for the teacher in some book on religious pedagogy or on the history of the Jewish religion with questions on the readings assigned, an assignment of readings for the lesson material, a discussion of the aim of the lesson, a suggested point of contact, explanatory notes on the biblical passage to be taught, and illustrations and miscellaneous suggestions to be used in teaching it.

The bibliographies and assigned readings for the teacher serve the laudable purpose of giving the teacher a broader basis of information than could be obtained by studying each day merely the suggestions for teaching the next day's lessons, a practice into which teachers are too prone to fall. The aim of each day's lesson the author endeavours to define in terms of ideals easily applicable in the child's life, even though the biblical narrative might yield other more obvious morals for the adult. In his suggested points of contact, he falls into the same error that we pointed out in our review of Dr. Calisch's book, viz., that of telling one story as a point of contact for another, but the stories which he tells for this purpose are usually interesting in themselves and might be used as illustrations of the biblical moral if not as points of contact.

His explanatory notes on the biblical passages are perhaps the most successful feature of the book and must assist the teacher in developing an appreciation of the ethical content of the Bible. In them the author utilizes his knowledge of biblical geography and archaeology to cast light upon the Bible narrative. The value to the teacher of such side-lights upon the biblical story is too frequently underestimated. They are a great help not only in that they assist the child's intellect to understand the story in its true historic relations, but also because they can be used to help his imagination visualize the story, thus assisting the memory to retain it by making more vivid the first impressions conveyed by the lesson.

In that part of each chapter which Mr. Lehman devotes to 'illustrations and suggestions', he shows considerable resourcefulness. The author begins this section of each chapter with questions based on the moral of the story, often asking the children's judgement on some hypothetical case which might come within their own experience. He then illustrates the moral by some anecdote or story, and, finally, suggests a device by which this can be made to impress itself on the mind of the child. These devices are very ingenious, but it is a question whether their ingenuity does not sometimes militate

against their effectiveness by attracting too much attention to the illustration itself and away from the idea it is intended to illustrate. We quote, as an example, the following suggestion from the author's chapter on 'Jacob's Return', of which he makes 'conscience' the 'ethical theme':

'Place two glasses of water that look exactly alike on the desk; label one *Jacob* and the other *Israel*. Before the class assembles put a little nitrate of silver in the Israel glass. Call a pupil to the desk and tell him to drop a pinch of salt in the Jacob glass. Observe that no change occurs. Bid another pupil drop a pinch of salt in the Israel glass and call attention to the formation of a white cloud called a precipitate. Although these two glasses look exactly alike there is an invisible helper in one that gives it a certain power absent in the other. Although Jacob and Israel looked exactly alike there was an invisible helper in Israel, a conscience, that gave him a power lacking in Jacob.'

Among the most valuable of the devices Mr. Lehman suggests are those which work the subject matter of the history lesson into games that the children can play.

In general, the book commends itself for the thoroughness with which it adapts the biblical material to the needs of the child, but it has the defects of its qualities. Its directions to the teacher are so explicit that there is danger of the teacher's becoming too dependent on the book and failing to exercise her own resourcefulness.

One thing we cannot lightly forgive our author—that he repeatedly speaks of the Bible as the Old Testament. The term Old Testament implies the existence of a New Testament which is on a parity with it, and any sanctity ascribed to, or associated with, the 'Old Testament' would attach itself also by implication to the New, a result that the synagogue, which has never accepted the New Testament in its canon, must regard with apprehension.

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